

17 April 1984

CENTRAL AMERICA/ * * * *
U.S. AID

LEHRER: Yes, the ongoing dispute over what and when the CIA told Congress about mining Nicaragua's harbors continued today as it has for many days. Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker held a press conference in Tokyo, Japan, to defend the intelligence agency. He said the CIA briefed the Senate Intelligence Committee three times about the mining operation. Sunday, the Democratic vice chairman of the committee, Daniel Moynihan of New York, resigned from the panel, protesting what he said was the CIA's failure to do so. Baker said committee members may not have been briefed as thoroughly as possible, but they were told. There was a report late this afternoon about an earlier CIA-backed covert action in Nicaragua about which Congress allegedly was also not properly informed. Judy Woodruff takes the story from there. Judy?

WOODRUFF: Jim, last October, storage tanks at the Nicaraguan port of Corinto were destroyed in a sabotage raid, sending some 3.2 million gallons of fuel up in flames. Today, it was reported in Washington that the raid was a CIA operation controlled by American agents based on a ship off the Nicaraguan coast. According to the Associated Press, Congress did not learn of the CIA's involvement until Mar. 30, five months after the raid. This report joins the controversy in progress over the CIA's role in the mining of Nicaragua's ports. The mining has already raise the question, what should the CIA be telling Congress about its covert activities? For more on that, we turn to two CIA veterans; former director William Colby, who headed the agency from 1973 to 1976, and former deputy director Ray Cline, who served in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Mr. Cline, we saw in the Associated Press report today that sources, administration sources, said that members of the Senate Intelligence Committee had not been told about this latest sabotage incident, just as they had not been adequately informed about the mining. Should they have been told? RAY CLINE (Former CIA Deputy Director): Uh, my view is that the CIA should tell the oversight committees about the programs to carry out U.S. policies covertly. I don't think it is necessary to brief the congressmen on every detail. It would be impossible to do so.

Continued